GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:351
ANSWERED ON:21.03.2001
DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN
Y.S. VIVEKANANDA REDDY

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has held discussions with foreign countries with regard to the recent developments in Afghanistan; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH)

(a)-(b) A statement is placed on the table of the House.

Statement referred to in Parts (a) and (b) of the answer to Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 351 To be answered on 21.03.2001

(a) & (b)
(i) As the situation in Afghanistan impacts directly on India`s national interests, including its security concerns, Government has been closely monitoring developments there. Government have also been in touch with a number of countries in this regard and have been highlighting the threat posed by the Taliban to regional peace and security especially through terrorism, illegal trade in narcotics and the extremist ideologies of the Taliban. As a result of these efforts there is now a much greater international recognition that India`s interests are effected, also that India should have role to play in international diplomatic peace making efforts in Afghanistan.
(ii) Government have raised the issue of Taliban`s decree of 26 February, 2001, ordering destruction of all statues in Afghanistan, including Bamiyan Buddhas, with several countries. We condemned the Taliban decree and called upon the Taliban to ensure full protection of Bamiyan Buddhas and other relics. Prime Minister wrote to several Heads of Governments, including permanent members of the UN Security Council to the UN Secretary General and to Heads of Governments of countries with large Buddhist populations urging that the collective voice of humanity be raised against this outrage and that the Taliban be made to see reason. India also cosponsored a recent UNGA resolution on the subject which, inter alia, called upon the Taliban to abide by their previous commitments to protect Afghanistan`s cultural heritage from all acts of vandalism, damage and theft.